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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000945

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFHO1: HONDURAS COUP SITREP #55 09/21/2009 AS OF
16:00 LOCAL (18:00 EDT)

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 944 AND OTHERS

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (U) At 1300 local (1500 EDT), President Zelaya appeared on a balcony before a crowd of over 5,000 supporters who had gathered outside the Brazilian Embassy in Tegucigalpa, but made no statement. Earlier via radio and television channel 36, Zelaya publicly stated he was ready to sign the San Jose Accord, reiterated his support for the creation of a verification commission and called for mediation by the international community to facilitate the signing.

¶2. (U) Before Zelaya's public confirmation that he had returned, de facto regime president Roberto Micheletti broadcast a statement that if Zelaya was in Honduras, "the arrest warrants are ready."

¶3. (C) Post believes the presence of Zelaya in Tegucigalpa increases the prospect for violence, and we have urged representatives of all sides to maintain the peace. While Post has not received any official reports, Post anticipates the de facto authorities will reinstate a curfew and possibly highway road blocks to minimize travel of additional Zelaya supporters into the capital overnight. A curfew was announced from 1600 to 0700 local (18:00 to 09:00 EDT). Zelaya's daughter Pichu informed the Ambassador by telephone that the First Lady was with the President at the Brazilian Embassy, and that his son was with the crowd outside. She said she and her sister, Zoe, were headed to the Brazilian Embassy, as well.

¶4. (C) The Ambassador spoke with OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza and discussed his planned visit to Tegucigalpa. Insulza confirmed that he planned to arrive Tuesday with his OAS political director Victor Rico, Arias advisor John Biehl, and possibly Costa Rican Foreign Minister Bruno Stagno. The Ambassador and Insulza discussed the possibility of Insulza bringing two foreign ministers, possibly Panamanian Foreign Minister Juan Carlos Varela and Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa. Insulza said he would call both of them in New York, but expressed doubt on whether their heads-of-state would allow them to leave the UNGA. The Ambassador told Insulza that he would greet him at the airport and that the Embassy would provide support and logistics. The Ambassador also spoke with National Party presidential candidate Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo to discuss the

situation. Lobo said he planned to issue a public statement asking both sides to maintain the peace and seek reconciliation. Lobo said he was shocked by the recklessness of Zelaya's decision to return. The Ambassador encouraged Lobo to reach out to both sides and urge them to support the San Jose accord. The Ambassador also told Lobo that Insulza would be arriving Tuesday and that he would try and arrange a meeting between Insulza and the presidential candidates. Lobo welcomed the visit of Insulza and said any and all international assistance was urgently needed.

Infrastructure and Communications

¶15. (SBU) Toncontin International Airport in Tegucigalpa (TGU) and San Pedro Sula airport remain open.

¶16. (U) Most of Honduras' land borders with Guatemala and El Salvador are currently open to commercial and private vehicles. The borders between Honduras and Nicaragua have been closed intermittently since Friday, July 24.

¶17. (U) There are no reports of abnormal public utility outages in the country.

Consular and Embassy Operations

¶18. (U) The Embassy is open for normal business on Tuesday, September 22, with a liberal leave policy in effect for any

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employees unable to come in due to civil unrest or road blockages. The Consular Section was closed to non-emergency nonimmigrant visa (NIV) services on Wednesday, August 26, but remains open to American Citizen and Immigrant Visa services.

¶19. (SBU) All Mission employees and dependents have been instructed to remain within Tegucigalpa. No non-essential travel, either personal or official is authorized until further notice. All TDY travel into Honduras has been suspended for the remainder of the week.

¶10. (U) Post issued a revised Warden Message today, September 21. The Consular Section continues to regularly update ACS information on the Embassy website.

¶11. (SBU) An EAC meeting was held at 1400 local (1600 EDT), to be reported septel. The next EAC will be held Tuesday, September 22 at 1400 local (1600 EDT).
LLORENS